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Premier seems intent on re-establishing for the record the basic (pre-Cuban) Soviet negotiating position on Berlin while at the same time extending hints of possible flexibility in that position once talks get underway.

3. The very emphasis on the need for negotiations, combined with the fact the Soviets have as yet made no concerted effort to get talks going, suggests the Kremlin at the moment is primarily interested in gaining time to coordinate its own approach to the Berlin/German problem.

4. Furthermore, a number of outside considerations would also tend to dictate further procrastination on the Soviet part; to mention only the more prominent, the Cuban situation is not yet finally resolved, the FRG coalition crisis might possibly influence significantly future FRG orientation, and intra-bloc disputes have reached an all-time high in vituperativeness. The USSR may well prefer to avoid committing itself to anything more than an agreement to negotiate until it is in a position to evaluate these considerations more fully.

5. Meanwhile, the time won would also allow Moscow to sound out Western reaction to the latest Khrushchev overture to — a UN aegis for the Allied troops presently in Berlin — and determine whether it, and the subsequent elaboration on the theme, will stimulate some Western counter-proposal. If Mikoyan's comments are any guide, the Soviets seem more than a little perturbed by the very absence of any concrete Western proposals since last spring. Evidently they do not relish having to carry the ball themselves the whole length of the field, but their post-Cuban performance suggests they may be psychologically prepared to move toward an interim settlement if firmly pushed.

b-1
a-3

The "Last" Soviet Concession

Khrushchev's remarks [] were clearly calculated to stimulate a new round of negotiations on Berlin and Germany through a new Soviet "concession" on the troop-presence issue — allowing Allied forces to remain in West Berlin, but under a UN aegis. The Khrushchev proposal amounted to little more than the surfacing of a long-expected variant on troop presence, one which had more or less been implicit in the mounting Soviet references to the desirability of some sort of UN involvement in the Berlin issue, dating back to last summer.

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In any event, the Soviet Premier was careful not to discuss the technicalities of his "concession" (which both he and Mikoyan -- November 30 to Rusk -- indicated was "the last", just as Presidential Press Secretary Salinger was told last May that the NATO-Warsaw Pact contingents variant was the last). Khrushchev probably calculated his proposal would be considered a response to various Western allusions since last March to the notion of leaving Allied forces in Berlin in the guise of UN troops. If so, he evidently does expect the general theme of a UN presence in West Berlin can be discussed meaningfully at the negotiating table and that the West will be prepared to agree to negotiate on some such general theme.

1. Earlier variations on the troop presence theme have included:

- a) Aide-Mémoire, June 4, 1961 -- token contingents of US, UK, French, and Soviet troops, or military forces of neutral states under UN aegis.
- b) Soviet negotiating paper, January 12, 1962 -- three alternatives, 1) token US, UK, French, and Soviet garrisons; 2) UN contingents; or 3) contingents from neutral countries.
- c) Soviet negotiating paper, March 19, 1962 -- replacement of British, French, and American garrisons by token UN or neutral contingents.
- d) Khrushchev to Salinger, May 15, 1962 -- token contingents from the smaller NATO and Warsaw Pact states.
- e) Ambassador Dobrynin to Secretary Rusk, July 12, 1962 -- UN police military formations composed one-half of US, UK, and French contingents and one-half of an equal proportion of troops from one or two neutral states, one or two Warsaw Pact countries, and one or two small NATO states.
- f) Khrushchev speech, August 18, 1962 -- "We agree to a temporary presence in West Berlin of troops under the flag of the United Nations. But we cannot agree that these troops -- brought in so to speak as a guarantee -- should be troops of countries belonging to the aggressive NATO military bloc."

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seem to be a rather hastily patched up version of the package Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin submitted to Secretary Rusk July 12:

a) Western forces should become UN police units for a certain period (hinted to Salinger in May, explicitly advanced by Dobrynin July 12);

b) the number of troops not to exceed a specific level -- in this case the level of July 1, 1962 -- Dobrynin on July 12 had proposed the same cut off date.

c) contingents of the other UN states join the Allied troops already in West Berlin (addition of other states to the Allied garrisons has appeared in all of the other Soviet propositions since the June 4, 1961 aide memoire;

d) reduction of the troop level by equal quotas over a four-year period (Dobrynin July 12); and

e) transfer of UN headquarters to West Berlin.

Actually the only new element in the composite is the idea that the UN is apparently to retain responsibility for Berlin after all troops are withdrawn and that during the interim period Western forces would be under direct UN command.

Raising the Asking Price

These by no means appear to be definitive demands (Moscow is certainly aware much of the package was already rejected when Dobrynin first presented it).

At the same time, the way in which they advanced their proposition indicates they do not intend to be bound by it at the negotiating table. Yet by presenting such conditions, they probably expect to be able to begin talks from a relative "position of strength," which might not be the case if discussions get underway strictly

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on the basis of Khrushchev's self-advertised "concession" on a UN presence.

Background Music

While the Soldatov outline seems designed as a definite part of the general Soviet negotiating approach (and as a tactic it conforms to the well-worn Soviet pattern of advancing a seemingly reasonable proposition and then following up with unreasonable conditions if the original overture evokes interest), Khrushchev's conversation with Canadian Ambassador Smith the same day (November 28) appears to be primarily background music intended for more general NATO consumption. Much of it was practically identical with the Soviet Premier's earlier conversations.

If the set Soviet position that if agreement is not reached on one of the Soviet-prescribed variants for troop presence, the peace treaty will be signed with East Germany and military access to Berlin cut. There will be no civilian blockade and the onus for heightening tension by resisting Soviet measures would rest exclusively with the occupation powers.

The oft-repeated line has by now come to seem a rather obvious device for pressuring the West to continue the search for a negotiated solution, although of course it may also reflect one line of Soviet contingency planning should all else fail. However, there are no indications at this point that it represents the actual Soviet plan of action. At present its exploitation seems merely part of the overall Soviet attempt to keep the public record firm.

Reversion to Dialectics

Similarly, Khrushchev's comment to Ambassador Smith alters nothing in the Soviet UN aegis proposal. Khrushchev claimed quite accurately he had "never said" that troops of the three powers would remain in West Berlin at their present level of personnel and armaments without Soviet participation if placed under a UN aegis and no longer occupation forces. He told only that the USSR would no longer "dispute" the composition of the troop contingents and he made no reference at all to a Soviet role in West Berlin.

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Khrushchev's focusing attention on this point seems to have been done chiefly to explain and justify the Soldatov conditions (presented the same day) and at the same time re-establish the Soviet-presence-in-West Berlin idea as part of an asking price. Moscow probably feels it can safely bargain on this theme in any subsequent talks since the basic UN aegis idea seems to have fallen on receptive ears. Soviet officials in Bonn have long since hinted that their War Memorial and Spandau guards could constitute a "Soviet presence" in West Berlin when all is said and done, so the demand for token Soviet contingents in West Berlin can always be easily resolved.

It is also worth noting that Khrushchev refused to be drawn into any discussion on the meaning of "temporary" or on details of troop presence with Ambassador Smith. This too would imply the Soviets do not intend the Soldatov outline as a firm and fast public statement of their position, at least not for the present.

The Emerging UN Role

The manner in which Moscow is handling its proposal for a UN presence in Berlin suggests that the Soviets have not yet developed a firm concept of the potential UN role. They seem to be playing with a general idea and attempting to determine what might be worked out with it. In any event, the concept, as the proposals present it, of a UN command for the forces in Berlin is relatively vague, as is the view the "UN flag will replace the NATO banner" after all troops are withdrawn (a UN trusteeship?). Just what this is to mean in specific terms the Soviets themselves admitted would have to be clarified.

However, the one basically new prospect emerging from these post-Cuban exchanges is the idea of moving UN headquarters to West Berlin. This possibility has been broached on various occasions in the past but had never before been incorporated formally into a specific Soviet proposal. Thus, the Soldatov suggestion might mark the official start of a Soviet move in the direction of the oft-suggested UN-ization of Berlin, and it can not be absolutely excluded that all of Berlin, and not merely West Berlin alone, might eventually be involved. Despite their repeated arguments that East Berlin is not for discussion (Kohler-Semenov talk December 3 for the latest), the Soviets' argumentation on this point seems to be taking on a more defensive tenor of late. And, of course, Moscow has been careful never to take any irrevocable steps to prejudice the legal foundations of East Berlin's status -- it is still not incorporated into East Germany. The Soviets can be expected to insist adamantly on confining any UN role to West Berlin alone, but they have not finally closed the door to an all-Berlin possibility.

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Other aspects of the possible UN role in Berlin, its significance, pitfalls, and Soviet objectives in proposing it, have been discussed more fully in RSB-179, "Khrushchev Proposes UN Aegis for Western Forces in Berlin." (Attached)

Speculations on Soviet Intentions

All of these Soviet overtures since Cuba seem directed to the one end of encouraging future negotiations on Berlin; they do not, however, give the impression of any urgency about the need to start negotiations immediately, nor is there any indication of a Soviet feeling of urgency regarding the need to obtain a Berlin settlement by any specific date. The atmosphere of the Kohler-Semenov conversation seemed almost leisurely, and Semenov's own references to "broad issues" and a "wide exchange of views" suggests the prospect of extensively prolonged talks. (The Kohler-Semenov exchanges could in themselves easily evolve into the so-called deputy foreign ministers' forum if the Soviets should so desire, allowing the Berlin question to be discussed exhaustively without committing either party to any concrete arrangements until an understanding could be hammered out, or not hammered out, as the case may be.) Similarly, Novotny's reported statement to the Czechoslovak Party Congress December 4 that the Berlin Wall had already "implemented part of the aims" of the proposed German peace treaty would seem to be a public bloc announcement that the treaty itself is no longer of overriding importance or urgency (if it ever was).

The hesitancy, or lack of rush, of the Soviets on Berlin at the moment may reflect primarily Moscow's desire to wait out other developments before getting too involved with the Berlin/German question. The Cuban situation is only one such factor; others may well be the Bonn coalition crisis, which is likely to have far-reaching effects on Soviet tactics toward the FRG. Furthermore, the Sino-Soviet controversy will inevitably play a significant role in any future Soviet course of action. Moscow may at this point very well intend to avoid committing itself to anything more explicit than an agreement to negotiate until it has had the opportunity to evaluate these outside considerations more fully. (On the other hand, what Moscow would expect to gain from a Western commitment to negotiate is discussed in RSB-179.)

Quo Vadis?

In any event, the sudden rash of Soviet discussions of the Berlin question suggests Moscow is prodding for Western counter-propositions and finds it difficult to firm up its own demands and position when it has no indication how much the West might be willing to tolerate. (Its knack for miscalculating Western tolerance was demonstrated once again in the overly high demands made in response to the British show of interest in the UN proposal.)

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Simultaneously, the Soviet performance both in discussions and on the Berlin scene suggests the Kremlin is psychologically prepared to go along in the direction of an interim Berlin arrangement palatable to the West if firmly and properly pushed. It is after all taking the initiatives and making the overtures. Moscow may attempt to detour via discussions on broader issues -- NATO-Warsaw Pact nonaggression agreements, disarmament and the like -- but the very physical facts of the Berlin situation evidently have convinced the Kremlin that some modus vivendi there must be found in time -- and the Soviets are evidently toying with the idea of UN-ization as an eventual solution. In any event, one significant public hint that Soviet demands on troop presence and free city agreements are undergoing considerable evolution was contained in GDR leader Ulbricht's speech at Cottbus December 2. There Ulbricht defined "peaceful settlement of the German question" merely as "conclusion of a German peace treaty which includes removal of NATO bases, agents' centers and revanchist positions from West Berlin." The formulation is far different from those heretofore used and would appear to anticipate an arrangement altering few of the facts of the situation but some of the nomenclature. In the meantime, however, Moscow can be expected to balk at every step on the way in order to try to salvage whatever can be saved of the solution it had hoped to achieve with its ultimatum in 1958.

Pressures

The game being played by the USSR in the negotiating forum does not, of course, preclude Soviet moves on the Berlin scene -- attempts to alter the status quo or to probe Allied firmness. At the moment, there is no indication the Soviets are prepared for or even considering anything beyond the usual type of minor probes and harassments endemic to the Berlin situation. These minor pressures do, however, assume a significance beyond their mere erosive effect on Allied rights if the Soviets actually are moving toward serious negotiations on Berlin. Western reactions to even the most minor Soviet probes of Allied intentions and determination would then tend to influence and possibly shape the entire Soviet negotiating attitude. Moscow will almost certainly gauge and calculate its negotiating concessions by the evidence it sees of Allied determination to block any unilateral moves against the status quo.

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